PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE

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In the Name of Allah,
The All-compassionate, The All-merciful

Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all being;
the All-compassionate, the All-merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray for succour;
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

O' Allah! send your blessings to the head of your messengers and the last of your prophets,
Muhammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your prophets and envoys.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ
اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ
أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

اللّهم صلّ على
سيّد رسلك وخاتم أنبيائك
محمّد وآله الطيّبين الطاهرين
وصلّ على جميع الأنبياء والمرسلين

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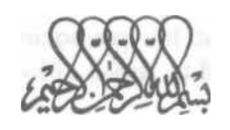
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Publication Secretary,
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23rd November, 1975
19 Dhilqa `d, 1395
Tehran - IRAN.



In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent,

The Merciful

THE ERA BEFORE THE ADVENT OF ISLAM

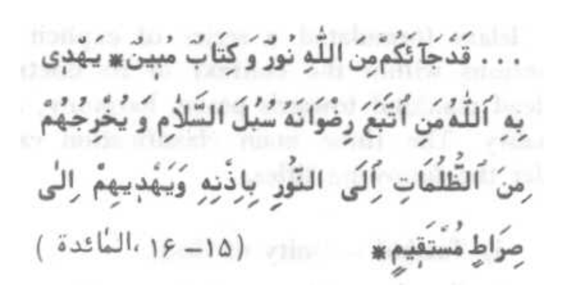
Before the inception of Islam, the world was a scene of total chaos, prejudice, and oppression. People were obsessed with self-pride and glorification. Depending on their localities, people adopted various beliefs, with the idol worshippers being in the majority.

Relation between people individually and collectively was based on the theory of "Might is right". The rich and the mighty considered the poor their chattels. The poor were deprived of their basic rights. The mighty considered it their prerogative to persecute the weak and suck its blood. In that lawless society, standards of living degenerated to those of lower animals.

The policy of the ruler was to satisfy and fulfil his needs and wishes at the expense of the people. The poor were reduced to serve as serfs at the whims of the despotic ruler.

When mankind was so deeply engrossed in futile and harmful practices, God, Most High out of His endless mercy sent His Messenger to purify them and restore their dignity.

The rays of sunlight pierced through the dark clouds of Arabia and proclaimed



. . . قَدْ جَآءَكُم مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَٰبٌ مُّبِينٌ * يَهْدِى
بِهِ ٱللَّهُ مَنِ ٱتَّبَعَ رِضْوَٰنَهُۥ سُبُلَ ٱلسَّلَٰمِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم
مِّنَ ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ إِلَى ٱلنُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِۦ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَىٰ
صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ * (المائدة، ١٥ــ ١٦)

. . . *there has come to you indeed from Allah a Light and a Clear Book. Thereby, does Allah guide those who seek His pleasure on the paths of peace, and leads them out of every* (kind of) *darkness into light by His Will, and guides them to the right path.* (Qur'an, 5:15-16)

Islam is comprised of a doctrine and a method, and its message can be divided into different classes within the context of this doctrine and method. In short, this message is an invitation to the world of peace and enlightment.

Islam formulated a series of explicit instructions within the context of its doctrine to lead mankind towards peace, harmony, and equality. The three main classification came under the following titles.

i) Tawhid - Unity of God;
ii) Equality of human beings; and
iii) Justice.

Islam by emphasizing and stressing the Oneness of God, began to make inroads into that sector of idol worshippers and believers of false gods. As a result, the power of idolatry of false gods was greatly undermined and ultimately this myth was wiped out. People, irrespective of their colour or caste were brought under the banner of Islam. Human faith was raised from false gods and idols to the belief of God, Creator of all mankind. In this respect the Holy Qur'an states

بَدِيعُ السَّمٰوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ
تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةٌ وَ خَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عَلِيمٌ * ذٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَآ إِلٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ خَالِقُ
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَاعْبُدُوهُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ *

(الأنعام، ١٠١، ١٠٢)

The Originator of *the heavens and the earth. How can He have a son when He has no consort, and* (when) *He has created everything and has knowledge of all things. Such is Allah, your Lord. There is no god but He, the Creator of all things, so worship Him. And He is the Guardian over everything. (Qur'an, 6:101-102)*

. . . فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا . . .

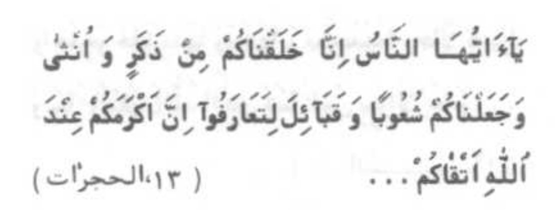
(الروم، ٣٠)

. . . The nature made by Allah - the nature - in which He has created mankind . . . (Qur'an, 30:30)

By establishing the Oneness of God, different peoples were integrated within the common religion. Islam is then a concept that.compre-hends a universal relation between man and God. Every aspect of Islam rotates about the doctrine of Unity which Islam seeks to realize first of all in the human being in his inner and outward life. The *"Shahadah"; laa ilaha illa 'llah,* is the most universal way of expressing Unity. For this reason Islam is based from beginning to end on idea of Unity, for God is One.

Therefore, this Unity expresses itself in the integration of human society which Islam has established. There is only one Muslim people no matter how scattered and far its members may be. No individual or a particular group can claim to have a special status in relation to God.

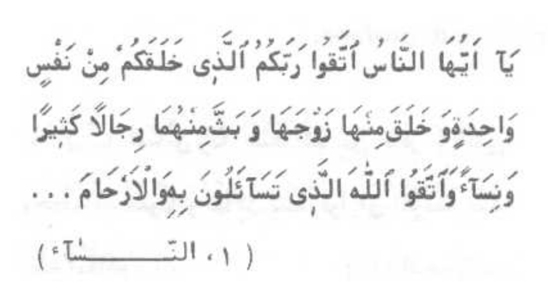
The idea of Unity was thus established and no distinction has ever been made between the sacred and profane.


يا أيها الناس إنا خلقناكم من ذكر و أنثى
و جعلناكم شعوبا و قبائل لتعارفوا إن أكرمكم عند
الله أتقاكم . . . (١٣، الحجرات)

0 Mankind; We have created you from a male and a female; and We have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognize one *another. Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you . . .* (Qur'an, 49:13)

This doctrine of Unity has further been asserted in Islam by exemplifying the common

originality of mankind.


يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِى خَلَقَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ
وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا
وَنِسَآءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِى تَسَآءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ . . .
(١ ، النِّسَآء)

0 ye people; fear your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and created therefrom its mate, and from them twain hath spread many men and women: and fear Allah, in whose name you appeal to one another, and fear Him particularly respecting ties of *relationship ...* (Qur'an, 4:1)

Relation between people has been established under the Divine Law. In Islam the embodiment of the Divine Will is not a set only of

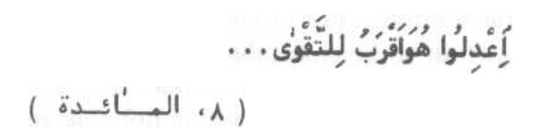
general teachings but of concrete ones. Not only is man told to be charitable, humble or just, but how to be so in particular instances of life. The Divine Law contains the injunctions as applied to every situation in life. It is the law according to which Allah wants a Muslim to' live. It is therefore a guide of human action and encompasses every facet of human life.

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ. . .

(الحـــديد ، ٢٥)

Verily, We sent our Messengers with manifest signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance that people may act with Justice ... (Qur'5n, 57:25)

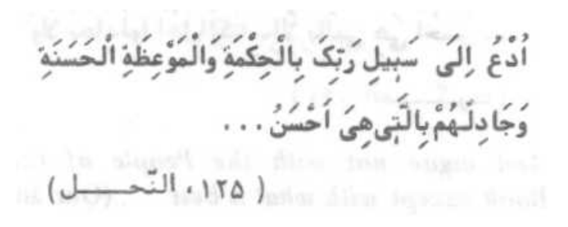
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ
بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَآنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا



O ye who believe be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity: and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be just, that is nearer to righteousness . . . (Qur'an, 5:8)

RELATIONS WITH NON-MUSLIMS

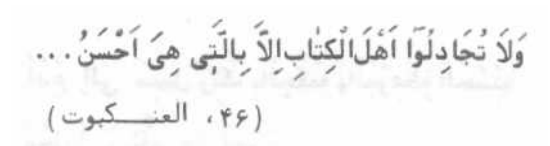
The message of Islam encompasses every aspect of human life. Islam cautions its followers from being over-zealous and restricts use of force in converting other people. Islam has laid down a set of regulations on the manner in which Islam was to be preached and spread.


اُدْعُ إِلَىٰ سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ
وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ . . .
(١٢٥ ، النّحـــل)

Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in a way that is best ... (Qur'an, 16:125)

لَآ إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ . . .
(٢٥٦ ، البقـــرة)

There should be no compulsion in religion. Surely, right has become *distinct from wrong. . .* (Qur'an, 2:256)


وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ...

(٤٦، العنكبوت)

And argue not with the People of the Book except with what is best ... (Qur'an, *29:46)*

Islam does not like anyone to be forced to believe in its message. The holy Qur'an says:

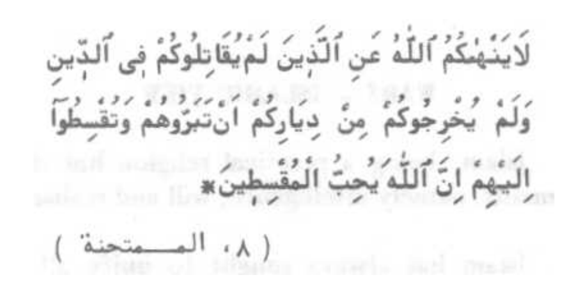
... أَفَأَنتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

(٩٩، يونس)

. . . *will thou, then, force men to become believers?* (Qur'an, 10:99)

It is crystal clear from these verses that Islam aimed at spreading its message through peaceful means - by patient persuation and logical reasoning and not through use of force.

Islam insists upon its followers to maintain good and amicable relations with non-Muslims. This statement is emphasized by the following verse of the holy Qur'an:



Allah forbids you not, respecting those who have not fought against you on account of religion, and who have not driven you forth from your homes, that you be kind to them and act equitably towards them: surely Allah loves those who are equitable.
(Qur'an, 60:8)

No wars would have been fought had the non-Muslims communities let Islam spread its message without interference and hindrance or if they did not resort to wanton persecution of the Muslims.

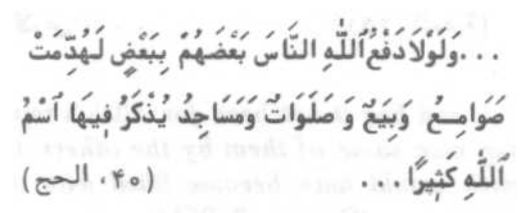
WARS - ISLAMIC VIEW

Islam, being a practical religion has three elements, namely intelligence, will and realism.

Islam has always sought to unify all domains of people under the banners of Islam. Therefore, it faced the problem of coming across hard core enemies and the inevitability of war.

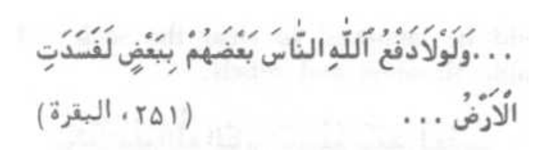
Islam has never initiated wars but only fought back in defence of their basic rights when there was a threat to peace and order had to be restored. In this case, a police action

would be launched to clear the society from trouble shooters and rebels.


. . .ولولا دفع الله الناس بعضهم ببعض لهدمت
صوامع وبيع وصلوات ومساجد يذكر فيها اسم
الله كثيرا . . .   (الحج ، ٤٠)

. . . and if Allah did not repel some men by means of others, there would surely have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is often commemorated. . . (Qur'An, 22:40)

It is obvious from this verse that but for the resistance put up by the Muslims, there would not have remained places of worship. This is one of the examples when it was obligatory for Muslims to fight to defend places of worships and their right to worship AllAh.



. . . *and had it not been for Allah's repelling men some of them by the others, the earth would have become filled with disorder . . .* (Qur'an, 2:251)

It was sacrosanct to uphold the primary value of religion and maintain discipline in the society. This required the Muslims to be harsh on traitors and prevent them from causing chaos and disorder.

Islam by legislating war limited it. Use of force was permitted only in self-defence. Hereunder are situations where it was obligatory for Muslims to fight.

i) To wipe out oppression and injustices

ii) To defend the right to freedom of worship; and

iii) To defend the state.

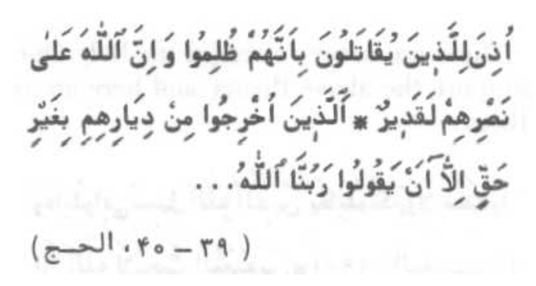
There are many verses (in the holy Qur'an) to support the above theory and here are some of them

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١٩٠ ، البقــــرة﴾

And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors. (Qur'An, 2:190)

. . . وَقَاتِلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَافَّةً كَمَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ كَافَّةً
وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٦ ، التـــوبة﴾

. . . and fight the idolaters all together as they fight you all together: and know that Allah is with the righteous. (Qur'an, 9:36)



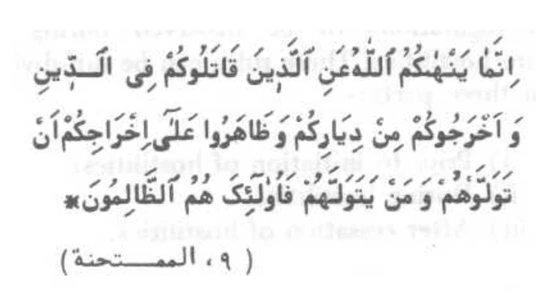
أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظُلِمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ * الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِن دِيَارِهِم بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَن يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ...

(٣٩ – ٤٠، الحج)

Permission (to fight) *is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been oppressed - and Allah indeed has power to help them. Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly only because they said, `Our Lord is Allah' . . .* (Qur'an, 22:39-40)

These verses prove that Muslims were only allowed to fight in self-defence against oppres-

sion and tyranny. A summary of this theory is given in the following verse



إنما ينهكم الله عن الذين قاتلوكم في الدين
وأخرجوكم من دياركم وظاهروا على إخراجكم أن
تولوهم ومن يتولهم فأولئك هم الظالمون
(٩ ، الممتحنة)

Allah only forbids you, respecting those who have fought against you on account of (your) *religion, and have driven you out of your homes, and have helped* (others) *in driving you out, that you make friends of them, and whomsoever makes friends of them - it is these that are the transgressors.* (Qur'an, 60:9)

RULES GOVERNING CONDUCT OF WAR

By legislating war, Islam laid down rules and regulations to be observed during the entire hostilities. These rules can be sub-divided into three parts:-

i) Prior to initiation of hostilities;
ii) During hostilities;
iii) After cessation of hostilities.

CONDITIONS PRIOR TO INITIATION OF HOSTILITIES

Whenever it appeared that war was imminent Islam required its followers to find solution to prevent outbreak of hostilities and maintain peace. Before launching the offensive, the Muslims were required to negotiate with the enemy and offer them three options to prevent war.

i) To join the rank of Muslims by embracing Islam;
ii) To conclude friendship treaties;
iii) To refrain from fighting or aiding enemies of Islam by supplying them with arms.

If the enemy refused to accept these conditions, then Muslims were justified to go into the offensive.

Muslims attached great importance to these conditions and strictly adhered to them. An example is given when al-Imam `Ali (peace be up on him) went to fight against `Amr ibn `Abdiwudd in the battle of Trench *(Khandaq)*.

al-Imam `Ali (peace be upon him) invited `Amr to embrace Islam and he refused. Then `Ali requested him to withdraw and not fight, but again he refused. When al-Imam `Ali exhausted all charnels of persuasion, did he start to fight with him.

This proves that Muslims are peace loving and made wars only when the enemy showed intransigence and inflexibility. Those, among Muslims who did not observe these rules were punished.

RULES OBSERVED DURING HOSTILITIES

We have seen that only "defensive wars" were permitted in Islam. Muslims were not allowed to go into the offensive to seek vengeance or recriminations.

During the. fighting Muslims were forbidden to kill women, children, the old and the sick, and those who did not participate in the fighting. Muslims were not allowed to mutilate or maim enemy soldiers; and destruction of enemy property was also prohibited unless the enemy took the initiative in this kind of action. Muslims were not allowed to kill wounded enemy soldiers lying on the battlefield. They

were required to maintain the highest standards of conduct.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) issued comprehensive instructions on exercising maximum restraint. When Muslims heard the Holy Prophet refusing them to kill children, they protested, "Are not these children of idolaters?" The Prophet replied, "Were not your ancestors idolaters?"

Islam prohibited Muslims to cut essential supplies such as water and food from reaching the enemy. The Muslims were required to put up a courageous fight and not kill their enemies through hunger and thirst. During fighting, if an ambassador of the enemy entered Islamic territory to negotiate terms for cessation of hostilities, he would be granted maximum safe conduct. Islam empowered Muslims to release prisoners of war or offer peace to the enemy if that did not jeopardize or harm Muslims.

The Holy Qur'an says:

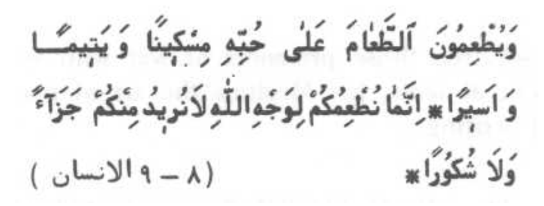
وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ...

(٦، التوبة)

And if anyone of the idolaters ask protection of thee, grant him protection so that he may hear the word of Allah; then convey him to his place of security . . . (Qur'an, 9:6)

AFTER CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES

Standards of conduct during the war applied after the war also. Muslims were ordained to treat prisoners of war with kindness.


وَيُطْعِمُونَ ٱلطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِۦ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ۞ إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ ٱللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنكُمْ جَزَآءً وَلَا شُكُورًا ۞ (٨ ــ ٩ الانسان)

And they feed, for love of Him, the poor, the orphan, and the prisoner. Saying: `We feed you for Allah's pleasure only. We desire no reward nor thanks from you'. (Qur'an, 76:8-9)

Muslims set free their prisoners of war with or without ransom. In many cases prisoners of war were set free without ransom but in particular situation it was necessary to ask for ransom.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) released many prisoners of war with or without any ransom. After the battle of Badr, the Holy Prophet of Islam promised

to set free those prisoners of war who would teach, at least, ten Muslims the art of reading and writing.

In order to combat malicious propaganda campaign against Islam, Islam employed public relations campaign to keep the non-Muslims fully informed of the aims of Islam. The Muslims conducted this campaign by:

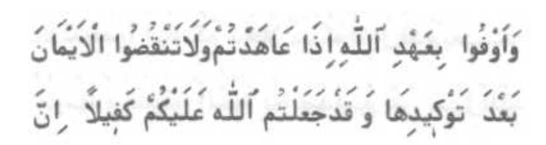
i) Sending Ambassadors;
ii) Concluding bilateral agreements (with non-Muslims.

From the very beginning, the Holy Prophet sent letters to all neighbouring states explaining the aims and objects of his mission, and sent representatives to different tribes to explain the message of Islam. This was done to counter anti-Islamic propaganda by the enemy.

Muslims concluded defence pacts with various tribes and states to safeguard their common interest and reduce threat of war.

Islam had such a defence pact with the tribe of Khuza'ah and had to go to its aid against the Quraysh in the event of Hudaybi yah. Islam was prepared to grant concession for the sake of peace as can be seen from the "Treaty of Hudaybiyah" concluded by the Holy Prophet of Islam in 8 A. H.

Islam ordered its followers to strictly adhere to the treaties concluded and not violate any of the clauses. There are many verses in the holy Qur'an on this subject but we shall quote only a few of them.



ٱللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ * وَلَاتَكُونُوا كَالَّتِى نَقَضَتْ
غَزْلَهَا مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ أَنكَاثًا تَتَّخِذُونَ أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا
بَيْنَكُمْ أَن تَكُونَ أُمَّةٌ هِىَ أَرْبَىٰ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ . . .

(النحل ، ٩١ ــ ٩٢)

And fulfil the covenant of Allah when you have made; and break not the oaths after making them firm, while you have made Allah your surety. Certainly, Allah knows what you do. And be not like unto her who, after having made it strong, breaks her yarn into pieces. You make your oaths a means of deceit between you, for fear lest one people become more powerful than another... (Qur'an, 16:91-92)

وَلَاتَتَّخِذُوٓا أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا بَيْنَكُمْ فَتَزِلَّ قَدَمٌ بَعْدَ
ثُبُوتِهَا وَتَذُوقُوا ٱلسُّوٓءَ بِمَا صَدَدتُّمْ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ

وَلَكُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ (٩٤، النحل)

And make not your oaths a means of deceit between you; or your foot will slip after it has been firmly established, and you will taste evil because you turned away from the path of Allah, and you will have a severe punishment. (Qur'an, 16:94)

CONCLUSION

Islam is a Divine revelation which was placed as a seed in the heart of man who was the receptacle of this message. Man is the container. He cannot break this container; he can only purify it and empty it of the pungent substance that fills it so that it can become worthy of receiving the Divine nectar. It is by emptying

the cup that man becomes worthy of receiving the message of heaven. It is by becoming a worthy field that the Divine seed becomes sown in it. The seed of Islam was placed in the heart of man through the Qur'an and the instrument of its propagation among men, the Prophet. From this seed there grew that spiritual tree which has created one of the greatest civilization in history, a tree under whose shade a sizeable segment of the human race live and die today and find meaning and fulfilment in life.

THE END